

ENTERPRISE CLOUD SERVICES

Gift Voucher Shop entrusts its beating heart to Sungard Availability Services' Managed Private Cloud



More than 5,000 businesses work with The Gift Voucher Shop (GVS) to motivate their workforce, recognise those going that extra mile and provide added benefits to attract new employees and help build loyalty and retention. The company's market-leading product is the One4all multi-store gift card that can be spent in over 24,000 outlets throughout Ireland and the UK and now online.

GVS had relied on Sungard AS to host its physical servers at Sungard AS's highly resilient Technology Centre in Dublin for many years. However, as they neared end of life GVS needed a future-proof IT strategy that would accommodate its steady growth. GVS recognised its choice of cloud provider was critical. As IT Manager Anne Bracken remarked, "It's fair to say the infrastructure Sungard supports is the beating heart of our business. Without it, everything stops so uptime is critical."

GVS embarked on a formal procurement process. As the company is 53.6% owned by An Post, it had to select the most economically advantageous tender to comply with Ireland's public procurement policy. Sungard AS's proposal for a cloud-based solution was ultimately found to best meet GVS's need to comply with PCI DSS requirements whilst remaining cost-effective.

GVS has zero tolerance for downtime. Not only would the business suffer significant revenue loss and reputational damage but, as the One4all gift card is a regulated product, the firm could also be subject to punitive sanctions.

Its business is seasonal with 50% of sales being made in the last two months of the year so a failure in the run-up to Christmas could be catastrophic. Consequently, it needed to ensure its IT infrastructure would be secure, resilient and highly available.

GVS opted for a dual site Managed Private Cloud from Sungard AS and Managed Services that ensure its entire IT infrastructure is constantly monitored and keeps running 24/7/365. To meet the firm's recovery time objective (RTO) of 60 minutes and recovery point objective (RPO) of 15 minutes, Sungard AS has replicated GVS's cloud environment so that it has up-to-date images at all times for instant failover.

The GVS website, through which gift card orders are placed, processed and fulfilled, is the 'beating heart' of its business. IT Manager Anne Bracken explains, "If the website goes down, the business goes down." Fortunately, its resilient and robust design – with load balancing within each individual site and global load balancing between the two – means the risk of a failure is negligible.

Business challenge

GVS is the successful company behind the One4all brand and the market leading multi-store gift card in Ireland and the UK, the One4all gift card. The firm's continued growth has meant it needed an IT environment that could scale up quickly to accommodate rising demand for its popular gift card, which is accepted at more than 24,000 outlets throughout Ireland and the UK.

Solution

- Managed Private Cloud
- Managed Services
- Consultancy.

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With a small in-house IT team, Anne Bracken values the support she enjoys from Sungard AS. She comments, “I’m really happy with the Managed Services Sungard provides – such as security, patching, monitoring, logging – they take away all the hugely important but time-consuming tasks and free me to focus on core business, rather than infrastructure management.”

She adds, “The Sungard people I deal with are seriously knowledgeable and keen to help. I see them as partners, an extension of my own IT team.”

With One4all gift cards being a highly prized employee benefit, they are growing in popularity so the scalability Sungard AS’s cloud affords is vital. Looking to the future, Anne Bracken remarks, “We’ve just renewed our contract for another three years and I can’t predict what direction technology will take. But whatever the shape of our infrastructure, I see the relationship with Sungard continuing long-term.”

Business benefits

- High availability of applications and services with maximum recovery time (RTO) of 60 minutes
- Highest levels of security and regulatory compliance, essential for a regulated product
- Moves IT infrastructure and applications spend from CapEx to OpEx budget
- Low-risk transition from physical to cloud environment
- Ability to scale up within hours to match demand
- Freedom to focus on core business by removing the burden of infrastructure management.

About Sungard Availability Services

Sungard Availability Services provides managed IT services, information availability consulting services, business continuity management software, and disaster recovery services. To learn more, visit www.sungardas.co.uk or call 0800 143 413

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